CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

SECRET

COUNTRY	USSR	REPORT NO.	00-A-3,203,015
SUBJECT	Oleg E Pirogov, Soviet Exchange Student/ Unexpected Return to the USSR/His Possible Susceptibility to Recruitment/ Incident with Academician [illegible] [illegible]	DATE DISTR.	4 December 1961
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DATE OF INFO.	20 Nov 61 and earlier		C/S Mogan 5
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	[illegible]/27 Sep - 23 Oct 61		Source: [Prof. Charles Gilbert Overberger Polytechnic Inst. of Brooklyn]

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE: US citizen, head of the chemistry department of a large US technical institute.

During the period 27 Sep to 23 Oct 61, Oleg E Pirogov, Soviet Exchange Student under Lacy-Zarubin agreement, was under the supervision of [himself and] members of his staff.

1. Oleg Nikolayevich Pirogov came to do post-doctorate research work in the Department of Chemistry under the supervision of [myself and] my associates* on 27 Sep 61. He came pursuant to the Lacy-Zarubin exchange agreement and it was intended that he would remain here for a period of three or four months. He had been here less than a month when his sudden and unexplained departure occurred on 23 Oct 61. Prior to coming here, he had been a Scientific Associate of the Institute of Chemical Physics, of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow.

2. We were very much disturbed by Pirogov's sudden departure because we feared that the whole exchange program might have been jeopardized. So, on 27 Oct 61, we sent a cable, to Professor Nikolay Nikolayevich Semenov, a member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, who is the Head of the Institute of Chemical Physics, Moscow, where Pirogov had worked. Semenov replied to this cable with a cable which we received 11 Oct 61. It was very conciliatory. It stressed that Pirogov came back for family reasons. "We are extremely sorry," it said, "and will write a letter with details later." However, no such letter has arrived to date, 20 Nov 61.

3. Another cable was sent by the National Academy of Sciences, 6 Nov 61 to Mr Mstislav Vsevolodovich Keldysh, President of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, on this subject, but no reply has been received, as far as I know.

4. As far as I am concerned, I am sure that [illegible] that Pirogov's wife and family made him return to the USSR is not the reason for his departure.

5. I think his departure [illegible], [illegible] is a [illegible] to being explained. Or it may have been a combination of two or three [illegible] which that brought about his recall.

6. Pirogov fitted in very well here. He is a very personable fellow. We gave him the title of Visiting Scientist. He seemed to work with particularly;

*[Prof. Herman Mark + Murray Goodman]

12/4 Copy to FI/SI6 and SR/6.

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graduate about four or five years after receiving their Ph.D. When he
arrived, he spoke very little English but was learning fast. He had a
room in a dormitory over at the Long Island College, where we ensured
was clever. He made many friends. He is married and has a wife and two
children who remained in Moscow. One of his parents came from the Ukraine,
I believe. The F A S has all the details. "They are paying the freight."

7. He was favorably impressed with Pirogov's ability and regard him as a capable research worker. He is well informed in the limited area in which he has been working. He mixed well with the other students. He was not pretentious. He did not seem to hide anything. On the subject of launching For example, he did not pretend that the USSR's is up to ours in the US. He was not proselytizing for the Soviet system. It seemed to me that he was the sort of man who might have been converted to the US way of doing things, if he was not careful. It may be that the people to whom he reported in the Council of the Soviet Delegation to the UN at Park Avenue and 68th Street, New York City, may have reached the same conclusion. Or his departure may have been brought about for other reasons, for example, by his brush with Leonid Sedov's [illegible] academician and president of the International Astronautical Society and Chairman of the Soviet Interplanetary Commission.

8. *Dr Sedov was visiting our institution and one of us thought it would be a good idea for Pirogov to meet Sedov. This was brought about at a reception where he was introduced as "Pirogov of Moscow." They shook hands and Pirogov said something in English like, "pleased to meet you." Sedov said something to him in a very sharp tone in Russian and later, in the elevator, drew him aside and lectured him in a very stern voice. I was present and observed that Pirogov grew pale. Later, he became very nervous and went to the UN Delegation Headquarters on Park Avenue and 68th Street. I understand that they laughed at his apprehensions and told him not to worry. However, from then on he became more nervous. Somebody, he said, had indicated that he was talking too much. He was afraid he had given away some important information.

9. This was a lot of baloney because we already know what they are doing. He certainly had no reason to feel he was disclosing more than he should. He only disclosed what was necessary to do the work planned for him in the problem assigned under the exchange agreement. It would have been impossible for him to carry out his assignment without making the disclosures that he made. You just cannot work on such a project without being communicative. Just the same Pirogov became very apprehensive and said he might be recalled. "They will reprimand me anyway. They think I have talked too much about what we are doing in the Institute of Chemical Physics." Pirogov had taken the position that it was not wrong for him to talk about his work at this Institute in the USSR, which is the one headed by Semenov, incidentally. Pirogov understood that an exchange project cannot be all take and no give. There is supposed to be an exchange of information.

10. Another thing that contributed to Pirogov's apprehensions was the fact that he had not heard from his wife or family for several weeks. He was greatly concerned about this. However, I believe he did have a letter from his wife just before he left.

11. My own feeling is that his popularity worked against him. The complacent people in the UN Delegation office did not like the idea of his becoming a part of the community here. The students liked him and he went to dinners with them. When some of my students were celebrating receiving their degrees, Pirogov joined the party and after dinner he came along with the rest of them to have a brandy at my house. He obviously acted like a human being.

12. In my opinion, Pirogov's superiors made a serious mistake in not appreciating what a good propaganda agent he was for their system, even though he was not afraid to admit that the Soviet system is not perfect and that there

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in a housing shortage, for example. They thought he talked too much and was too friendly. He did not keep his mouth shut and he did not act like a bear. I am sure they concluded that he was susceptible to conversation. I thought so myself.

13. So I suspect that Pirogov dug his own hole. He had to report to the Council of the [illegible] Delegation every week and, in the process, his general attitude got across to them. He talked too much. His conversation with Sadov was an example.

14. Again, what he was working on here was very close to what he had been working on under Semenov and the Council may have jumped to the conclusion that he was telling us all that he knew.

15. The problem on which he worked here was the copolymerization of dienes and alpha-olefines using a transition metal catalyst system. For example, one of the copolymerizations on which he worked involved the diene, butadiene, and the alpha olefine, propylene.

16. He was known to many of the staff and was intimate with ten or fifteen students here but was probably most intimate with the man with whom he shared a laboratory. This was an Italian, named Dr Basilio [illegible]. They appeared to be good friends.

17. I do not think that Pirogov was the victim of an informer. I have wondered about this a lot but I do not think this is what happened. I think, as I said before, that he dug his own hole. Incidentally, we were most anxious to keep this incident out of the papers and there was no leak. Had there been an informer, this might not have been the case.

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